LITHUANIA RESUMES PROTESTS AGAINST LATVIA'S TALKS ON OIL EXTRACTION IN DISPUTED BALTIC SEA CONTINENTAL SHELF

VILNIUS, Jun 26, BNS - The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry has reiterated its protest against Latvia's attempts to start utilizing a continental shelf oil deposit in disputed territorial waters. Rimantas Sidlauskas, a Lithuanian foreign ministry secretary, handed in an note to this effect to Alberts Krenevskis, first secretary of the Latvia Embassy in Vilnius. The document repeatedly voices protest against Latvia's negotiations with companies of third countries on extracting oil in disputed territorial waters in the Baltic Sea.

Lithuania's note of protest came in the wake of a statement by Inesis Feifers, state secretary of the Latvian Economic Ministry, about a regular round of talks between Latvia, the US "Amoco Overseas Exploration Company" (AMOCO) and Swedish oil company OPAB on the possibility of extracting oil in the Baltic Sea.

LITHUANIA, RUSSIA PARTLY CHANGE VISA RULES. Lithuanian and Russia relaxed visa requirements this week for persons traveling between the two countries Trips certified by Russian or Lithuanian tourist agencies or having an accommodation voucher for a holiday home, sanatorium, or other recreational institution in either country will no longer require a visa. Lithuanian and Russian citizens who are permanent residents of the other country will also be able to travel in both countries without visas. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

DRUG-RELATED CRIME RISES. Drug-related crime rose sharply last year in Russia. There were 74,000 drug-related crimes in 1994, an increase of more than 60% over 1993. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, drug usage has surged and most drugs smuggled into Russia are said to come from traditional former Soviet suppliers in Central Asia, Ukraine, and Lithuania where crime organizations are involved in refining locally grown drugs. -- Thomas Sigel, OMRI, Inc.